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REPORT OF THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL

Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the World Food Council, New York, 14-15 September 1992

The mandate, functions and future role of the World Food Council

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its eighteenth ministerial session, held at Nairobi in June 1992, the World Food Council (WFC) agreed to review its role and functioning within the wider context of global food security management and the overall restructuring of the social and economic activities in the United Nations system, and to communicate its views to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. For this purpose, the Council agreed to establish an Ad Hoc Committee open to States members of WFC. That Committee met in New York on 14 and 15 September 1992. Attendance at that meeting is shown in annex I.

2. The Committee's terms of reference were:

(a) To review issues related to the current global management and coordination of food-security and hunger-alleviation programmes and to elaborate proposals for their improvement;

(b) To define, within this context, the possible future contribution of WFC and make specific proposals respecting its mandate and functions and options for its future role.

3. The Committee was to draw not only on written submissions by WFC members, but also on proposals made at the Council's eighteenth ministerial session, including those related to independent identity, relationship to other agencies, location of secretariat, venue, agenda and frequency of ministerial sessions. Written submissions by Council members prior to the Committee meeting, and country statements made at the meeting, will have informal distribution (in English only) at the meeting of the Second Committee at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

4. In accordance with the Council's decisions at Nairobi, the ad referendum report on the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee (WFC/1992/L.2) was, immediately after the meeting, sent to all member Governments for their consideration. Thirteen member States transmitted their referrals (see annex II to the present report) to the WFC secretariat. Nine of these fully support the content of the report. Two request a more explicit reflection of the positions of the country concerned, and two others express concern that their positions are not correctly reflected in the report. Every effort has been made to reflect these and other comments and suggested amendments adequately in this final report, which is transmitted by the President of WFC, on behalf of the Council, to the President of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

5. At Nairobi, the World Food Council proposed that the General Assembly, in its restructuring of the economic and social system of the United Nations, review the mandate, operations and future role of WFC, taking into account the report of the Ad Hoc Committee.

II. OPENING STATEMENTS

6. In his opening statement to the Ad Hoc Committee, the President of the World Food Council reviewed the Council's mandate, with its three major functions of problem- and policy review, policy guidance and leadership, and coordination, and its achievements and shortfalls in relation to that mandate. In his view, the Council's relative strength has been in policy guidance, although the powerful leadership expected of it has not been consistent. A particular weakness has been in coordination, although there are important examples demonstrating the Council's potential for coordination through policy guidance. In the President's view, the Council's shortfalls, although to some extent traceable to the instruments available to it to fulfil its mandate, are as much linked to the way it goes about its business as to how effectively it is supported by its secretariat. These shortfalls can therefore be overcome by reforming the functioning of the Council and of its secretariat.

7. Synthesizing the reform proposals submitted by WFC members, the President pointed to two basic sets of options, the first implying the dissolution of the Council as a separate entity and the second calling for fundamental reforms of the Council's functioning. Offering his own views on the first set of options, the President expressed his doubts about the viability of proposals to integrate the functions of WFC with those of the Economic and Social Council or the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). While favouring the second option of retaining WFC as a separate entity, the President called for a substantially new approach to its functioning, by which it would evolve into a truly "cabinet-level working body", serving the General Assembly and a revitalized Economic and Social Council as a specialized political advisory arm on hunger-alleviation policies and as a political advocate promoting and monitoring the implementation of General Assembly or Economic and Social Council resolutions on food and hunger problems.

8. In a message to the Ad Hoc Committee, the Secretary-General stated his intention to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to deal with development issues in an integrated way, and also to seek ways to strengthen the role and contribution of the agencies and to enable the United Nations to draw more systematically on them. The United Nations role in relation to food issues should be viewed in that light. In the exercise of that role, it appeared that, in line with that approach, the best course would be to centre the exercise of coordinating food issues more closely around the newly restructured Economic and Social Council. Arrangements would have to be worked out for that purpose, including procedures for regular reporting from FAO, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). It would be essential to draw on the demonstrated capabilities of those agencies in order to ensure coherent management of the policy and operational aspects of the world food problem. He was confident that that approach would serve to advance the original objectives of the World Food Conference, of 1974, and at the same time enhance the effectiveness of the restructuring process.

9. The Secretary-General also noted that, on the basis of those approaches, he had carried out the first phase of restructuring the Secretariat and was now extending the process of reform to parts of the Organization away from New York, including WFC. A primary objective would be more effective organization-wide distribution of responsibilities, based on a clear understanding of priorities. He was also seeking to enhance the effectiveness of inter-agency coordination through the Administrative Committee on Coordination and had commissioned a comprehensive study by a high-level consultant of its functioning with a view to developing new approaches to system-wide collaboration and ensuring that the structures of inter-agency coordination were well adapted to the development challenges ahead.

III. AREAS OF AGREEMENT

10. The Ad Hoc Committee reconfirmed, above all, a genuine desire by all member States for an improved response by the United Nations system to world food and hunger problems. All WFC members agree that the objectives of the World Food Conference, which WFC was mandated to pursue, are at least as important in the 1990s as they were in 1974. They also agree that, despite important achievements, WFC has been unable to meet all of the ambitious expectations of its founders. These shortfalls are partly linked to the instruments given to the Council to fulfil its broad mandate and partly to the way it has been functioning. There is also general agreement that, in a rapidly changing world, there can be no continuation of the status quo for WFC or for the United Nations as a whole.

IV. OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

11. Against this background of general consensus, WFC members have differing views on how the United Nations system, including WFC, could improve its effectiveness in dealing with the problem of world hunger and malnutrition. As already noted by the President, there are essentially two sets of options advocated by member Governments. One consists of proposals to transfer the Council's mandate and functions elsewhere in the United Nations system. The other consists of proposals for significant reform of the functioning of WFC.

12. In the first set of options, advanced by four countries prior to or during the Ad Hoc Committee meeting, one suggestion is that the policy-leadership and policy-coordination function of WFC could best be served by a revitalized Economic and Social Council, with a meeting of both Ministers for Agriculture and Ministers for Development or their representatives to be held every two years, and that the Administrative Committee on Coordination be responsible for coordination of operational activities. Specifically, the coordination of United Nations activities in food policy, especially as they relate to hunger and malnutrition, should become the responsibility of the Subcommittee on Nutrition of the Administrative Committee on Coordination.

13. Another suggestion is to transfer broad policy direction and coordination of food-security issues to the Economic and Social Council, while entrusting FAO with food-security analysis and a policy-direction function, with food-security issues to be discussed by Ministers for Agriculture in a one-day meeting at the FAO Conferences.

14. In a third proposal, one country feels that improvement of the modus operandi of WFC would not in itself solve the Council's fundamental problem and, as one of the choices, draws attention to the idea that the role of policy leadership be transferred either to the General Assembly or to the Economic and Social Council and the coordination function to the Administrative Committee on Coordination, and that monitoring and analysis work should be done in conjunction with the activities undertaken by other, more expert, bodies, in particular FAO.

15. Finally, one member country proposes that the mandate of WFC as a food-policy forum be transferred to FAO, an agency responsible for norm-setting, data dissemination and operational activities, to be combined in future with the function of cross-sectorial coordination and setting of priorities by an International Development Council, for the time being to be exercised by the Economic and Social Council.

16. Each of these four proposals implies the dissolution of WFC as a separate entity. One of the proposals calls for a review of the effectiveness of the proposed new arrangements five years hence.

17. In its referral to the report of the Ad Hoc Committee, one member country indicates that, after reviewing other views as reflected in the report, it has arrived at the position that the mandate of WFC can best be fulfilled by other existing United Nations agencies. It believes that collective world food security can be achieved only through the reorientation, revitalization and strengthening of FAO, WFP, IFAD and the United Nations. In this scenario, there would be no role for WFC or a similar body. The Council's functions would be redistributed thus: (a) during the FAO Conference, Ministers for Agriculture would discuss the role played by FAO and WFP, with similar discussions taking place in IFAD; (b) the Secretary-General would coordinate implementation of decisions through the Administrative Committee on Coordination; (c) Heads of State or Government would determine policy directions through the General Assembly.

18. One rationale - although possibly a secondary one - behind the proposal to transfer the functions of WFC and to the Economic and Social Council and the Administrative Committee on Coordination has been the need for saving resources in an overall environment of financial restraint, especially United Nations resource requirements of over $1 billion per year for peace-keeping and peace-making activities. It must be remembered, however, that the WFC budget of some US$ 3.5 million per year is only a minute fraction of those requirements. It is even smaller in relation to the approximately $4.5 billion spent annually by the United Nations system on food and agricultural development assistance.

19. Nevertheless, some countries argue that any savings could be put to better use elsewhere in the United Nations system, such as more food aid or more humanitarian assistance. However, there are diverging views on the extent to which the transfer of the mandate of WFC elsewhere in the United Nations system would result in savings, since other organizations would have to allocate extra resources. In addition, the Government of Italy indicated its willingness to assume part of the costs of the Rome-based WFC secretariat.

20. The second set of options, which is supported by the majority of member States, favours maintaining an independent WFC, but reforming and streamlining its functioning to increase its efficiency and effectiveness. Fifteen members expressed this view at the Ad Hoc Committee meeting. It has been stressed that the Council needs to strengthen its monitoring and coordination functions, in order to ensure that the agencies of the United Nations system work in a coherent and coordinated fashion towards the achievement of the World Food Conference objectives. To this end, WFC needs to sharpen its policy guidance and direction to the agencies and exercise its authority to request agencies to report to it on their policies and programmes to eradicate hunger and malnutrition. In this context, it has been stressed that WFC should establish its own programme of action for coordination as its mandate requires. Such reorientation could be achieved within the Council's current resources, and a streamlining of its functioning could possibly result in reduced expenditures.

21. As a variant of this set of options, or a possible third option, there have been some calls for increasing the Council's manpower and financial resources.

22. In support of these efforts, the need for a substantially new approach to the functioning of WFC has been pointed out, with a view to serving the General Assembly and a revitalized Economic and Social Council as a specialized political advisory arm on hunger-alleviation policies and as a political advocate promoting and monitoring the implementation of General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions on food and hunger problems. Its sessions must be prepared through an intensive process of consultations concerning the choice of priority areas for WFC consideration, corresponding policy development and the identification and successive narrowing down of disagreements among members, reflecting the spectrum of diverging views of the international community as a whole.

23. This preparatory process would leave to WFC ministers only those problems and disagreements needing ministerial-level resolution and decision. Such a rigorous approach would also ensure that WFC recommendations become politically more forceful and take the form of "monitorable" and specific recommendations and directives. Together with more consistent efforts directed at ensuring the implementation of those recommendations, this would go a long way towards improved coordination by WFC.

24. Additionally, WFC members advocating the continuation of an independent WFC are in broad agreement on a number of measures to improve the Council's functioning. These include the biennialization of the Council's sessions to provide more time for their preparation and follow-up, with a large and increasing number of members favouring holding sessions in the intervening years of FAO Conferences; a more sharply focused and reduced agenda; greater emphasis on the development of specific monitorable recommendations; shorter ministerial sessions; keeping the WFC secretariat in Rome, as one element of the efforts needed to strengthen cooperation among the Rome-based food agencies, which are at the centre of the dozen-or-so agencies with major concerns related to food and hunger; and making Rome the venue of all sessions, although the desirability of holding sessions in New York and Geneva has been raised.

25. Finally, a number of States have made, or supported, detailed proposals to make use of the years between sessions to improve the functioning of WFC and its secretariat, including the establishment of a special WFC committee to oversee the preparation of, and follow-up to, Council sessions. Taken together, all of these proposals should make it more attractive for ministers to participate in the work and the sessions of WFC.

26. In connection with the second option, it was noted that, while ministerial-level deliberations were stressed in all projects for the revitalization of the United Nations, it would be going against the general trend, and giving the wrong signal, to abolish a ministerial-level body in an important area of North-South cooperation without replacing it with a similar body at ministerial level. However, some countries stressed that their proposals advocated continuing and even enhanced ministerial-level attention to global food and hunger problems.

27. In an effort to bridge the proposals of those member States favouring a strengthened role for the Economic and Social Council and the Administrative Committee on Coordination in lieu of WFC and those advocating a reformed WFC, it has been suggested that coordination of the operational activities should be excluded from the WFC mandate by transferring it to the Economic and Social Council and the Administrative Committee on Coordination while retaining and strengthening the policy-guidance and leadership function in a reformed Council. The transfer of coordination responsibilities would, according to one member country, be a reasonable suggestion, whether WFC continues or not.

28. A further proposal considers it imperative that WFC be reformed, streamlined and strengthened, while not excluding the search for alternative options in the longer run, as part of the overall reform process in the United Nations.

V. CONCLUSIONS

29. In the view of several countries, the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee only constituted the beginning of a consultative process on the options for the United Nations system and WFC for an enhanced response to food and hunger problems. The WFC President and Vice-Presidents were requested to undertake intensive consultations with States members of WFC and the international community at large in preparation for the General Assembly's deliberations at its forty-seventh session. In this connection, a number of members stressed that the present time of reform of the United Nations in general, and reform of the Economic and Social Council specifically, made it vital that WFC be included in the process.

30. In this context, the considerations of the ad hoc open-ended working group of the Economic and Social Council on overall restructuring of the United Nations in the social and economic areas will be relevant. The WFC President is asked to keep under review the developments in that group and inform WFC members of any decisions which would have a bearing on world food and hunger issues.

31. In this spirit, the World Food Council requests the General Assembly to take the present report into account when considering the most effective ways to fulfil the mandate of WFC in the framework of the overall restructuring of the intergovernmental machinery of the United Nations.

ANNEX I

Attendance

The following States members of the World Food Council were represented at the meeting:

Argentina	Gambia	Lesotho
Bangladesh	Germany	Mexico
Bulgaria	Guatemala	Nepal
Burundi	Honduras	Nicaragua
Canada	Hungary	Russian Federation
China	Indonesia	Swaziland
Colombia	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Thailand
Denmark	Italy	Turkey
Egypt	Japan	United States of America
France	Kenya	Yemen

The following States members of the Council were not represented at the meeting:

Albania	Central African Republic	Rwanda
Australia	Peru	Uganda

ANNEX II

Comments received from States members of the World Food Council

Australia

1. Australia noted that the ad referendum report includes in an annex the main points regarding the future operations of WFC contained in the Australian country statement and supplementary remarks made at the eighteenth ministerial session of the Council. These were reiterated in the Australian submission to the Ad Hoc Committee in July 1992.

2. The President of the Council has advised that the Ad Hoc Committee's report would now be transmitted to the President of the General Assembly for consideration during the forty-seventh session of the Assembly. In that context Australia wants to confirm that its Government's position remains that, for the immediate future, the Council retain its identity but work more closely with FAO and other Rome based food agencies to avoid duplication. Australia adds that, as pointed out in its submission, it favours review of the United Nations system generally and, if necessary, the implementation of reforms which will improve that system. Widespread institutional reform of the United Nations system is an essential prerequisite to winning the additional resources needed for the fight against hunger and malnutrition. It is considered necessary to be able to demonstrate that existing resources are being used efficiently and effectively.

Canada

1. The two options identified in the draft paper are either to strengthen WFC or to reallocate its functions elsewhere. It seems that many aspects of the first option were tried following the report of the Advisory Group of 14 February 1986. So far, the results have not been successful in turning around the performance of WFC. It would be beneficial to know the costs of achieving a strengthening of WFC and it is hoped that the next version of the paper will reflect that aspect. In view of the redefining of the role of the United Nations and a move towards streamlining of the United Nations system, the Government of Canada is not sure the time is right to press for more resources, which would probably be implied by a strengthening of WFC.

2. The Canadian objectives are to improve the management of the food security issue in the United Nations system, which would eliminate duplication and promote streamlining. As indicated in the Canadian discussion paper tabled at the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee, our objectives can be met through more ministerial attention to the problems of the hungry and malnourished in both FAO and the Economic and Social Council, as it undergoes reform and takes up new functions. The Secretary-General's representative stated at the meeting that he is looking at WFC within the context of the second phase of reform efforts, which is focused on the parts

of the United Nations system operating outside of New York. The reform of the WFC should be seen in this light. Regarding the important concern raised in paragraph 17 (para. 26 of the final report) of the report, we believe all Council members have given much concentrated thought to the possibility that abolishing a ministerial-level body in this important area of international cooperation would give the wrong signal to the world community. The purpose of the solution provided in the discussion paper is to raise the level of attention to the problems of the hungry and malnourished by both Agriculture and Development Ministers.

3. Paragraph 19 (para. 29 of the final report) of the report concerns further meetings on the reform of WFC. Although details are still to be worked out with both major options, now is the time to show commitment to the improved management of global food security. After many reports prepared over the years, the time is right for a resolution of the issue.

4. With regard to the specific text proposed, some comments are enclosed from those attending the meeting. It is to be hoped that in future such writing will take place within the context of a drafting committee, in order to offer greater efficiency.

5. The management of food security issues in the United Nations system is as important now as it was in 1974 when WFC was founded. The task facing us is a difficult one, and the President and the secretariat must be commended for their efforts in clarifying the issues and advancing the process to resolve the long-standing challenge of reforming the international management of food security issues. United Nations agencies are assuming a greater burden of the world's responsibilities and their efficiency and effectiveness are becoming increasingly vital.

6. The above comments are supplemented by the following drafting proposals:

(a) In paragraph 7, delete the word "only" from the phrase "In the first set of options, advanced by only four countries ..." in the first sentence;

(b) In paragraph 9, the first sentence should read: "The Secretary-General of the United Nations definitely favours ...", instead of ... "appears to favour ...";

(c) In paragraph 10, add a final sentence, reading: "Nevertheless, some countries argue that these savings of $3.5 million annually could be put to better uses elsewhere in the United Nations system, such as more food aid or more humanitarian assistance";

(d) In paragraph 11, replace the first sentence with the following: "Cost savings from the reallocation of WFC functions would not be complete as other organizations would have to allocate extra resources. However, the removal of duplication would still result in net savings to the system";

(e) In paragraph 12, the second sentence should start: "Eleven members expressed ...", and not "Seventeen members ...";

(f) In paragraph 17, replace the last sentence with the following: "However, some countries stressed that their proposals advocated continuing and even enhanced ministerial attention. The Canadian proposal envisages the greater involvement by Agriculture Ministers if meetings are held at the same time as the FAO Conference, which is the largest global gathering of Agriculture Ministers from both developed and developing countries. A revitalized Economic and Social Council would permit the additional attention of Development or Planning Ministers. These ministers would review the FAO recommendations in order to integrate them into overall systematic development policy and operations";

(g) In paragraph 18, add the following sentence at the end of the paragraph: "The transfer of coordination responsibilities would seem to be a reasonable suggestion, whether WFC continues or not";

(h) In paragraph 19, add the following two sentences to the end of the paragraph: "However, a number of members emphasized that WFC had already tried on various occasions to reform itself without success. They also stressed that the present time of reform of the United Nations in general, and reform of the Economic and Social Council specifically, made it vital that WFC be included in the process."

China

1. Since its inception in 1974, WFC has been actively carrying out various activities in pursuing the missions entrusted to it by the World Food Conference, playing a certain role in coordination and policy guidance in the fight against global hunger and malnutrition. The World Food Council is the forum where Ministers for Agriculture all over the world could interact.

2. However, it is generally acknowledged that many targets formulated at the World Food Conference 20 years ago have not been reached so far, many issues in the field of world food and agriculture have become even more complex, and the challenges we are now facing are still very serious. We believe, under such circumstances, that the coordination and policy guidance of activities for the promotion of world agricultural development and alleviation of global hunger and malnutrition should be strengthened, not undermined. Therefore, we appeal to the General Assembly to consider this point while restructuring the United Nations system. Meanwhile, before a better solution is found, we hold that one alternative to achieve this goal is to strengthen and reform the existing institution, the World Food Council, for the time being.

3. Strengthening is to ensure that WFC could fulfil its functions better and play the role of coordination and policy guidance in real terms, and reforming is to improve the working efficiency of WFC so that it may adapt itself to the ever changing situation.

4. Also, it is hoped that the strengthening and reforming of WFC be coordinated with and fully represented in the restructuring of the United Nations system, and it is hoped that the Council's goals can be realized.

Denmark

1. The Government of Denmark notes with satisfaction that the attitude pronounced by the Danish delegate to the Ad Hoc Committee is correctly reflected in the last sentence of paragraph 7 (para. 15 of the final report) of the report.

2. However it emphasizes that the many valid and interesting points expressed during the Ad Hoc Committee meeting have not given Denmark a basis for changing its view that the mandate of WFC as a food policy forum should be transferred to FAO combined with a new international development council. Until the establishment of the international development council, that function may be exercised by the Economic and Social Council.

3. Denmark intends to express this view during the current session of the General Assembly. This will be combined with the efforts under the Nordic United Nations Project to create the function of cross-sectorial coordination and setting of priorities of operations activities for development by an international development council.

Indonesia

Responding to the conclusions and recommendations of the report, especially to the mandate, function and role of WFC in the future, Indonesia tends to support the second option, as stated in paragraph 12 (para. 20 of the final report). Indonesia believes that as long as a food shortage in the third world is a major problem, world peace will always be at risk, and the development of human prosperity will always encounter obstacles. Therefore, an independent and reformed WFC is still in line with and strategic for human problems. However, mutual and effective cooperation between WFC and various international organizations dealing with food issues should be strengthened; this will lead to an increased and higher quality output.

Japan

1. Since there was no real dialogue during the meeting, the report reflects only preliminary views of the Japanese delegation.

2. As the report does not reflect the position of Japan, which was expressed in the statement made at the meeting, Japan proposes the following drafting amendments:

(a) In the first line of paragraph 7, replace the words "in the first set of options, advanced by only four countries" by the words "in the set of options, advanced by several countries";

(b) Add the following sentence to paragraph 7: "One country felt that improvement of the modus operandi of WFC would not in itself solve the Council's fundamental problem and, as one of the choices, paid attention to the idea that the role of policy leadership be transferred either to the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council and the coordination function to the Administrative Committee on Coordination, and that monitoring and analysis work should be done in conjunction with the activities undertaken by other, more expert, bodies, in particular FAO."

Lesotho

1. Further to the views expressed during the debate in the Ad Hoc Committee, and after reviewing other views expressed then as contained in document WFC/1992/L.2, the Government of Lesotho is of the view that the World Food Council's mandate can best be served by other existing United Nations agencies. It believes that collective world food security can be achieved only through reorientation, revitalization and strengthening of FAO, WFP, IFAD and the United Nations. In this scenario there is no role for WFC or a similar body.

2. Review processes of FAO and WFP have already been completed. Reviews of the United Nations and IFAD are in progress. Therefore the United Nations system can be said to be in a good position for effective global management and coordination of food security and hunger-alleviation programmes as foreseen by the World Food Conference of 1974.

3. Consequently, the Government of Lesotho feels that WFC can be dissolved and its mandate distributed as follows:

(a) Food security monitoring and analysis, as well as securing improvements in the efficiency of production and distribution of all food and agricultural products, may be left undisturbed as the global responsibility of FAO. FAO responsibilities will of course need to be coordinated with those of:

(i) WFP, responsible for food distribution through relief and emergency assistance programmes and through food aid development programmes;

(ii) IFAD, responsible for mobilizing funds to be made available on concessionary terms for agricultural development in developing countries;

(b) The coordination of the work of the agencies involved in food production and distribution may be the responsibility of the highest authority within the United Nations system, the Secretary-General. He can perform this duty through the Administrative Committee on Coordination;

(c) The role of political leadership in food policy guidance may be entrusted to the General Assembly through the revitalized Economic and Social Council. The Assembly should be guided in its decisions by regular reporting from FAO, WFP, and IFAD.

4. This arrangement should facilitate the involvement of the highest authorities at all levels of the work of the international agencies responsible for higher food production and a more equitable and efficient distribution of food between countries and within countries, and ensure that their operational activities are coordinated in an effective and integrated world food policy, as set out below:

(a) The Ministers of Agriculture will discuss the roles played by FAO and WFP during the biennial FAO Conferences. They will also discuss the role played by IFAD during the annual Governing Council meetings, as it has always been the case;

(b) The Secretary-General will then oversee and coordinate the implementation of decisions of the Ministers for Agriculture by the relevant food agencies through the Administrative Committee on Coordination;

(c) On the basis of reports from the food agencies and the Secretary-General, Heads of State and Government will determine policy directions through the General Assembly.

Mexico

Mexico agrees with the contents and structure of the ad referendum report. It considers that the report reflects objectively the work and proposals made by WFC member countries. It also considers that the report contains the Mexican proposal with respect to the future of WFC.

Nicaragua

1. The Government of Nicaragua believes that the reasons for which the World Food Council was established in 1974 still remain valid. Although it is true that the percentage of those suffering from hunger in the world is falling, 700 million people are still affected by malnutrition while the problems of food-security coordination are more complex.

2. In addition, although WFC has not met the expectations raised when it was established, particularly with regard to coordination, the Government of Nicaragua believes it would be wrong at this stage to dispense with WFC, bearing in mind current demographic problems and the hunger prevailing in some parts of the world, which dictate a need to modernize agriculture and preserve the environment in order to achieve food security. It therefore proposes that WFC be revitalized and modernized, which in practical terms means the following:

(a) WFC will be able to increase its efficiency by means of a clear establishment of priorities, first and foremost among which should be food-policy direction translated into activities relating to food production, agricultural development and the fight against hunger;

(b) Links between the pivotal agencies (WFC, FAO, WFP and IFAD) should be strengthened and more closely coordinated. Advantage would thus be taken of the technical expertise of FAO and the more specialized executing agencies would also be involved in the provision of food and financing;

(c) The respective roles of the 12 United Nations bodies dealing with food security should be reviewed and integrated into the activities of the pivotal agencies referred to in the paragraph above, with a view to avoiding duplication and inconsistency;

(d) It is recommended that the ministerial session of WFC be held at the same time as the biennial Conference of FAO, providing an opportunity to examine problems and policy issues relating to the food situation and to propose both corrective and preventive measures for consideration by Governments. WFC could then present its own programme of work, smoothly integrated into that of FAO, WFP and IFAD;

(e) A transfer of WFC's current headquarters in Rome would in no way benefit the proposed restructuring, only serving to increase the lack of coordination with other bodies based in Rome.

Peru

The Government of Peru expresses its agreement with respect to the Ad Hoc Committee report on the review of the World Food Council. Peru emphasizes that the proposals developed in this report are directed at improving the global management and coordination of current programmes and at alleviating hunger and attaining food security - concerns which it shares and supports with its own efforts to strengthen WFC.

Russian Federation

The Russian Federation fully supports the ideas in the ad referendum report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the review of the World Food Council.

Thailand

The Government of Thailand has no additional comments to make regarding the Ad Hoc Committee report and that the report can be transmitted to the President of the General Assembly.

United States of America

1. The United States of America is disappointed in both the tone and content of this report, which summarizes the discussions of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Review of the World Food Council. We had understood that the report would be a summary of the discussion by WFC member delegations. However, we do not recall the Committee discussing many of the arguments presented on the future of the Council especially related to the expansion of the Council.

2. The United States does not believe any member State attending the Ad Hoc Committee meeting offered a strong defence of WFC on its merits. Nearly all recognized that the Council had fallen far short of expectations. The Council has not effectively coordinated United Nations food policy or exerted a strong influence on the agricultural policies of member States. The United States and others continue to feel that hunger and malnutrition need to be given high priority within the United Nations system. This was the underlying reason behind our proposal on holding ministerial meetings on these issues in a revitalized Economic and Social Council. The opportunity to save funds by cutting down on duplicative discussions was secondary.

3. The United States does not recall a significant number of delegations calling for increasing the manpower and resources of WFC to solve its chronic problems as stated in paragraph 12 (para. 20 of the final report). In fact, a third option that surfaced in the discussion, i.e., a streamlining of the Council that would reduce expenditures and limit the focus of future meetings, appeared to have very significant support at the meeting but was omitted as a discrete option in the report.

4. The United States continues to support dissolution of WFC. Policy discussion focusing on hunger and malnutrition should take place at the ministerial level in the Economic and Social Council. They should be held every other year and involve ministers of agriculture and development as needed. We further believe that the coordination of United Nations activities in food policy, especially as they relate to hunger and malnutrition, should become the responsibility of the Subcommittee on Nutrition of the Administrative Committee on Coordination. These actions should be taken in support of the Secretary-General's welcome initiatives to revitalize the Economic and Social Council, and promote greater efficiency and less duplication in the United Nations system.

5. Hunger and malnutrition still damage the lives of hundreds of millions of people. They demand effective attention from the United Nations system. The World Food Council has failed to act as a focus for that attention, and we feel strongly it is time to look at other alternatives.